

1722. Then there were four interviews?—There were more than that; but I cannot say positively how many.

1722A. You left on the 12th?—Yes.

1723. Did Mr. Brewer see the Minister, to your knowledge, after that?—Yes, either on the 19th or the 20th. We were driving round, and at the Supreme Court buildings the Minister got out and saw two or three gentlemen, and Mr. Brewer amongst them. He also saw him several times after that.

1724. *Mr. Holmes.*] Were you present at any of the interviews between Mr. Brewer and Mr. Richardson?—Once—when Mr. Brewer came with Mr. Stark.

1725. What was said on that occasion?—I do not recollect. I was doing some different work in the room at the time.

1726. Were you present at the interview previous to the Minister going to Waiwera?—Yes; I went and brought Mr. Brewer myself to see the Minister, but I cannot say the date.

1727. Did you hear the Minister give Mr. Brewer any instructions?—Just that he was to go into the matter and let the Minister know as much about it as he could. The instructions were general.

1728. His instructions were to the extent that he was to go into the matter?—Yes; general instructions.

1729. What are “general instructions:” they might mean nothing or they might mean a great deal?—All I heard the Minister say was telling him to go into the matter.

1730. You heard the Minister give Mr. Brewer instructions to go into the matter, and inquire into particulars of value, &c.?—Yes.

1731. And that he was to have it ready by the time the Minister came back from Waikato?—Yes; and that he did so there was no doubt, because he made an estimate of it.

1732. How do you know?—It is on record.

1733. You have no doubt in your mind that before the 20th the Minister had four interviews with Mr. Brewer?—I have not the least doubt.

THURSDAY, 22ND JULY, 1886.

Mr. T. SEAMAN, Valuer, sworn and examined.

1734. *The Chairman.*] Mr. Seaman, as the evidence has been conflicting, the Committee have resolved to re-examine on oath those witnesses whose testimony is in conflict. You have had, have you not, an opportunity of correcting the evidence already given by you?—Yes.

1735. Are you prepared to make oath that that evidence is correct?—Yes.

1736. *Mr. Gore.*] I presume Mr. Seaman has read his previous evidence?—Yes.

1737. *The Chairman.*] You have seen the printed copy?—No, not the printed copy.

1738. But the manuscript copy?—Yes.

1739. The most important points in your evidence were these: You state in one of your letters to Mr. Sperrey that you knew nothing, before your valuation, of the offer made to Stark of £16,000; and, on the other hand, when you made your valuation, that you were guided by the making of that offer?—I think in my evidence I stated that my valuation previously made was thereby confirmed.

1740. You wish to state that the word “guide” is wrong?—The question put to me was, “Are you satisfied, and do you maintain the valuation?” I might have used the word “guide” as to being thereby supported in my valuation.

1741. The other point is that you had discovered an “error;” but you do not make it clear when you discovered the error?—It was on noticing a report in the papers that Mr. Mason had written to Mr. Sperrey or the Government that this property appeared in the rate-book for three years back, valued for £3,000 or £3,500: that led me to refer to my note-book.

1742. It is not clear whether you refer to twenty-eight acres or forty-two acres in your evidence?—It was to forty-two acres odd, valued by me in 1882 for £7,500.

1743. Then it was not twenty-eight acres you valued at £7,500?—No; it was forty-two acres. I have the valuation in my notes: “14 acres 3 roads 2 perches, as part of lot 4, £4,500; and allotment 3 and part 1, 28 acres 16 perches, £3,000.”

1744. On which block did the house stand?—On the fourteen acres.

1745. Can you say why it was valued separately from the twenty-eight acres?—In 1882 I was requested by the Commissioner to value each lot separately as we came to it. I did so.

1746. Then the fourteen acres was one lot in itself?—Yes, it was one lot in itself—lot 4.

1747. You referred to Mr. Frater in your evidence. What you said was this: that Mr. Frater told you—and Mr. Frater is known as a person of unimpeachable character—that had he been Stark he would have asked £50,000 for it. Do you consider that Mr. Frater was really in earnest when he said he would ask £50,000 for it if it were his?—The impression conveyed to my mind was that he considered it worth £50,000 to the Government considering the purposes for which it was required, and the opinions which had been given by three distinguished gentlemen that this was the property which must be taken for defence purposes.

1748. Do you consider that his statement had any reference to the actual value of the property itself?—Not independently of the purposes for which the Government required it.

1749. Then you do not attach value to the remark as indicating the actual value of the property itself?—No; I do not wish it to be understood as referring to the intrinsic value of the property.

1750. You state that you valued it at £15,600 perfectly independent of the offer of Cochrane?—I knew nothing of that offer.